

Musical instruments in Nepali sculpture

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Abstract

Nepal is rich in fine arts. Within the fine arts, music and sculpture have an interdependent relationship because of the various religions, cultures, festivals, and traditional practices, that have been existing since ancient times. As a result, varieties of musical instruments can be seen in some of the sculptural works such as metal, stone, and wood sculptures that the ancestors carved out and installed in the various temple courtyards. The main purpose of this article is to interpret and analyze, only the string instruments (*Tantri Vādya*), that have been carved in Nepali sculptures. To solve the query, some temple areas in the Kathmandu Valley have been visited to find out the sculptures carved along with musical instruments. From the study, it has been found that some *tantri vādya*, such as *veena* and other string instruments which are played using the bow, were seen played by various religious and mythological characters. Likewise, the instrument playing style and posture were also found in many manners. The present study is more focused on only the string instruments in sculptures rather than their historical background. Thus, future researchers will be get precise guide to study about others musical instruments too. Although the research is carried out within a limited time and area, the present paper appears to be relevant and fruitful for all the readers.

Keywords: *Gosthi*, music, *Kathtal*, *tantri vadya*, temple, sitar, string instruments, *veena*.

Introduction

Various types of musical instruments have been used in practice since ancient times. From the perspectives of religion, culture, caste, education, and entertainment, each of those instruments is significant in its own way. Most well-known religious sites, traditions, celebrations, and other events have always been influenced by various aspects of music since the *Vedic* period.

Religion and music have been considered complementary and interconnected subjects in Nepali society. The *Veda*, *Upaveda*, *Upanishada*, and traditional texts also speak for the interdependency between religion and music. Musicologist Darnal (2003, 95) also accepts that the interdependent relationship between these two, the instruments are found engraved in temples, monasteries, mosques, *Vihār*, and shrines. On the one hand, the idols of different deities with various idols are installed inside the temple, on the other hand, scenes of various characters carrying musical instruments can still be seen in the foundations, doors, windows, struts (*Tudāl*), Upper door (*Toraṇa*), hanging flags (*Pyāthanchhā*) are installed along with carving of musical instruments in the outer parts of various shrines. Likewise, the ancestors have been found practicing to donate and arrange the musical instruments to the religious sites to please the God, according to Regmi (2003). Therefore, the presence of various musical instruments in the sculptures from ancient times to the present day can easily estimates that the attitude towards music was high in the society and civilization of that time.

Fine arts include painting, sculpture, music, poetry, and architecture. Of these, music is of intangible nature, so music can be felt and understood only through hearing and experience, whereas sculpture is a tangible subject, so it can be visualized and touched. Although, the style of presentation of sculpture and music is different, the emotional aspect is essential in both these arts.

According to ancient philosophy, music includes singing, playing musical instruments, and dancing, while sculpture is an art that includes stone carving, metal art, woodcarving, and clay art.

From most of the chronicles from the *Lichchhavi* period up to 12th century in Nepal, the facts about various art-cultures can be studied as a unique treasure here. Then created treasures such as monasteries and temples, paintings, books, installed idols, inscriptions, architectures, traditions, and the *Jātrā* (festival) are valuable means of observing history.

The *Malla* dynasty in Nepal began in the early 12th century and lasted till the 18th century. During this period too, many monasteries, temples and *Vihar* were established in Nepal. Many *Gosthi*, feasts and festivals were started and handed over to the next generation. Trade, agriculture, religion, and cultural aspects flourished, especially during the *Malla* period, due to which the era is considered the golden age of art and culture.

There is a lot of evidence associating the *Malla* kings themselves with the creation of music and literature stated in the inscriptions. The monasteries, temples, *Pāti-pauwā* (Public shelter), and *Vihār* constructed during that time, are still acknowledged as unique architectural and sculptural works of art in the world, today. So, In the international arena, Nepal is known as the land of various art-cultures and temples.

The sculptural artworks found while travelling to some temples in Kathmandu valley are focal matters to study in special reference of stringed musical instruments in the present article. Present study will undertake an exploratory and analytical study on the kinds of musical instruments, specially string instruments (*Tat Vādya*) that have been engraved on the sculptures in some temple courtyards which have been enlisted in the “world heritage site” of Kathmandu Valley.

This effort will pave the way for all those researching the development of music in Nepal. Basically, some major queries such as: what kind of musical string instruments were engraved on sculptures in Nepal; who are the characters playing such instruments; how was the status of music in the society at that time; and how was the style and posture of playing the instrument at that time; will be addressed analytically.

As far as concerned with former research works relating to above title, very little information has been disseminated regarding musical instruments and sculpture in some books, articles, and other documents. Thus, the present study will be an appropriate and ample document for the society for conserving and preserving the historical artworks for future reference.

Significance of Study

Present study will provide the key information about carved musical instruments on Nepali sculptures in the Kathmandu valley. It makes possible to determine the types of musical instruments and styles that were popular during the old days through sculptural art. After the study, the knowledge about the classification of musical instruments in that era can be gained. In particular, the answer to the question of what types of string instruments as well as the playing styles were in vogue at that time can be answered. Since, some of the historically significant

temple premises on the World Heritage list have been made as the area of study, the present study will provide future researchers with a guiding role in their related and relevant research activities.

Methodology

In order to collect the data required to reach the conclusion of the present research, secondary material sources such as books, and articles have been reviewed. Similarly, primarily some sculptures of mythological characters, some parts of temples such as struts, windows, doors, pinnacles (*Gajura*), pillars (*Thā*), foundations, flags, hanging banners (*Pyāthanchhā*), and other carved figures have been observed. For this, pictures of sculptural artworks have been taken by visiting by the author himself, at *Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square* in Kathmandu, *Bhaktapur Durbar area*, *Pātan Kumbeshwar*, *Gokarṇeshwara Temple*, *Bagalāmukhi temple*, *Chāngu Nārāyan temple*, *Mahālxmi temple area*. Purposive sampling technique is applied to visit the temple area. The data obtained have been analyzed with a special focus on string instruments. The present research follows field research design.

Sculptural arts

The word "sculpture" is used for any animate, inanimate and imaginary object. The art of creating an idol is called sculpture. In the *Sanskrit Nepāli* dictionary, an image or symbol made by carving in the form of a deity is called an idol or 'Murti'. The word 'murti' in *Sanskrit* language means a solid body or form made up of available solids material. The term is defined as an *avatār*, manifestation, form, image of a deity or other physical substance. An idol is also called a shadow, a replica (Pradhan, 2004, 1). A variety of solid materials are used to make the idols. In ancient times sculptures were made of clay, metal, stone and wood, but in modern times glass, rubber and other chemical solids are also used in sculpture. Sculpture is made by carving wood or melting metal and casting it into a model, also known as modeling and molding. The idols to be included in the present study were installed in ancient and medieval times. Metal sculpture, wood sculpture and stone sculpture with string musical instruments installed in Nepali temples will be focused under study.

The subjects of sculpture are varied such as mythological gods, historical characters, imaginary objects and different items of society. *Nepāli* sculpture is widely based on religion. That is, the creation of Nepali sculptures as an integral part of the religious side is evident from the installation of statues of gods, *Yaksha* (demons), and other characters holding various musical instruments.

Musical arts

Another subject directly related to religion is music. It is applied either for praise or for entertainment since *Vedic* times through the singing of the *Veda* (Pradhan, BS 2071, 57). The practice of worshipping or praising through the music for nature and gods seems to continue with the development of human civilization.

It is mentioned in various *Vedic* literature that music was also prevalent with the beginning of this world. In Eastern philosophy, music is associated with religion and culture. Therefore, the presence of various mythological and cultural texts and legends is considered relevant in relation to the origin of music. Similarly, the views expressed by different scholars regarding the prevalence and use of music in different periods of history are equally important.

In Eastern civilization, the relationship between music and the *Veda* is very intimate. The *Shukla Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sāma Veda*, *Atharva Veda*, and other branches of *Veda* and *Purāna* describe the use of music for devotion, ritual, worship, *sādhanā* (meditation), and entertainment.

So, Music is considered as an essential subject for human life. The mention of musical instruments like *adambara*, *veenā*, *tunav*, conch, *pani* in the *Yajur veda* further confirms the *Vedic* historicity of music (Singh, 1994, p. 34).

The worship of "Aum" is emphasized in all the *Veda* and *Purāna*. The word is made up of three letters 'A', 'U', and 'M', in which 'A' is the creator Lord *Brahmā*, 'U' is the maintainer Lord *Vishṇu* and 'M' is the destroyer Lord *Maheshwar*. According to *Hinduism*, *Buddhism*, and *Sikhism*, the word 'Aum' is considered to be the ultimate sound from which creation began (Poudel, BS 2035). The sound is known as the *Nāda*.

Amongst the *Veda*, *Sāmaveda* has been described as the source of music (Pal, 2015). There are 3 types of sounds used in the singing of *Sāmaveda*: *Udātta*, *Anudātta*, and *Swarita*. The vocal process which is pronounced with a high tone is called *Udātta* (Acute or sublime or high-frequency *Nāda*). *Anudātta* is a sound that is pronounced as opposed to *udātta*, i.e. low-frequency *Nāda*, while *Swarita* (circumflex) is a *Nāda*, which is sung between *udātta* and *Anudātta*.

Sublime *Nāda* is denoted by a vertical dash (|) above the sound, while *Anudātta Nāda* is represented by horizontal dots (·) and *Svrit Nāda* is not marked. These three kinds of *Nāda* consist of 7 musical notes *Sā* (C), *Re* (D), *Ga* (E), *Ma* (F), *Pa* (G), *Dha* (A), and *Ni* (B) in various pitches. Through the proper and pleasant combination and arrangements of those musical notes, a piece of music is composed.

Almost all ancient epics and texts composed about music mention that singing, instrumental presentation, and dance are included in the music. Singing is also known as vocal music, while musical instruments include the instruments related to 7 note-based music and percussion. Since ancient times, instruments have been classified into four categories namely *Taṭ* or *Tantri* (Chordophone or String Instruments), *Avanadda* (Membranophone), *Ghana* (Idiophone), and *Shushir* (Wind or aero phone). Over time, today's instruments can be divided into 6 categories: *Taṭ* (plucking instrument), *Bitṭ* (bowing instruments), *Avanadda*, *Ghana*, *Shushir*, and electrical musical instruments (Poudel, 2021). Since the development of electrical instruments was not available during ancient times, the electric instruments have not been found engraved in the sculptures, obviously. Even, some eminent and traditional instruments such as *Tamburā*, *Harmonium*, and Violin have not been also engraved in the ancient and medieval sculptures.

From the point of view of the study, *Taṭ* and *Bitṭ* both are string instruments, but the sound production technique is different from each other. The category of string instruments includes those instruments in which the musical sound is produced through the string by either bowing or plucking or hammering. *Veenā*, *Santoor*, *Ektāre*, *Sitār*, *Sārangi*, *Sarod*, *Premtāl* (Kandel, 2004, 145), *Bhātemādal* (Kandel, 2004, 157), violin, *Isrāj*, others are string instruments or chordophones.

The Interrelationship between Music and Sculpture

Music and sculpture are also included among the 64 arts mentioned in ancient eastern philosophy (Ganguly, 1962). Music is an invisible art or a type of abstract art, whereas sculpture is a visual art. Music is presented through vocals, rhythms, verses and body movements. That's why it is also called performing arts. Sculpture is presented in a different way than music. Sculpture is the art of creating various visible multidimensional idols by carving or modeling solid materials. Although the presentation of these two arts is completely different from each other, the interrelationship between these two cannot be denied. A quote from music composer

Kishore Gurung's article is relevant here, which states that knowledge of singing is necessary for sculptural art.

A king wanted to learn how to make idols of gods. For this he consulted a sage. "One must learn the rules of painting before understanding the rules of sculpture", advised the sage. "Then", said the king, "teach me the rules of painting." "Without the knowledge of the art of dance, it is not possible to understand the rules of painting", replied the sage. "Then teach me the art of dance," requested the king. "It will be difficult because you don't know the instrumental music," said the sage. The king was still getting impatient. "Then why don't you teach me instrumental music?" he asked hastily. "But you cannot understand instrumental music", replied the sage, "without a deep study of singing, instrumental music cannot be learned, because singing is the source of all arts" (Gurung, 1993).

Since there is a close relationship between religion, music, and sculptures in the eastern point of view, music and religious thought come together in some of the sculptures installed in Nepal (Darnal, BS 2045). In other words, the creation of stone art, wood art, and metal art installed in the temple complex is guided by certain religious, and mythological legends. In the *Sanātana (Hindu)* tradition, there has been a tradition of describing and carving the idols along with musical instruments of many mythological characters such as *Saraswati, Ganeshā, Krishna, Brahmā, Vishnu, Shiva, Gandharba, Apasarā* (Angel) associating with musical context (Darnal, BS 2044). The main reason is that the various aspects of human behavior here have never been unaffected by music (Regmi, 2015) nor they have been isolated from worshipping the idols of Gods and Goddesses. In this way, many figures consisting of musical instruments such as *Natarāja Shiva, Veenā Vādini Saraswati, Vanshidhar Krishna, Nritamayi Ganesh, Nandi-Bhringi* with *Pushkara* have been mentioned in some articles of researcher *Ram Sharan Darnal* (BS 2045). Similarly, as stated in a research report, some examples of sculptures related to *Sanātana* tradition and music are situated at *Tudāl Devi* temple in Kathmandu, *Bālakumari* Temple in *Bhaktapur*, and other places (Regmi, 2003, 48-60).

The famous German poet Johann Wolfgang Goethe described architecture as frozen music (Eberhard, 2009, 752). According to him, music is inherent in any architecture. Just as human emotions are transmitted from person to person while listening to music or watching a dance, so in the creation of any architecture or sculpture. The sculptor tries to convey the feelings and thoughts to the audience through his art. Therefore, Goethe's comments on music, architecture, and sculpture seem relevant.

Similarly, another scholar American composer Harry Partch (1901–1974) during the 20th century, defined music in physical point of view. According to him, music is not abstract art, but a physical object, even though the mainstay of musical creation, tone, and rhythm, are abstract subjects. In a research paper, Vadim Keylin expressed the materiality-based notion that music is the form or combination of instruments, the attitude of the performer, and the engagement among listeners (Keylin, 2015, 1). Thus, in this sense, an idol obviously is a physical thing, and music is also interpreted as a physical entity.

According to another research, music performed by an artist can be converted into a three-dimensional virtual sculpture with the help of MIDI keyboards, computers, etc., through a

tool called “vector sequence models”. In his paper, author has described music as hearing-sculpture or watching-music (Karttunen & Tenkanen, 2016, 528).

Similarly, another researcher Kennedy (2020) compared the rhythm (continuation of components) in painting or sculpture applied in the use of some tangible materials such as color, shape, structure, form, and pattern with the such rhythm which is essential in music. According to author, just as the music flows with a definite rhythm, in the same way, rhythm should be essential in the making of paintings and sculptures too.

As described in religious and mythological legends, gods and goddesses, demons, *Yaksha*, *Gandharba*, etc. were also well versed in music, so people considered them as ideals of their life. In order to keep the some religious or ideal characters alive and to transmit the knowledge related to them from generation to generation, the sculpting of idols was started.

Thus, there is no doubt that the sculptures of the gods, demons and *Gandharba* have been continuing with the presence of musical instruments too. So, it cannot be denied that music has been found to be a powerful medium for passing on ideas and knowledge across generations through sculpture. Kanal (BS 2055, 1) has also expressed that, the religion, sculpture, and music have been of interest to each other since ancient times.

In this sense, through the above references, it can be clarified that; there is a close interrelationship between music and sculpture; and that why the musical instruments were engraved in Nepali sculptures.

Nepali sculptures engraved with *Tantri Vādya*

Some religious sites in Kathmandu valley, which are on the World Heritage Site List, have been visited to observe the statues engraved with musical instruments, which are essential sources for the presented study. Notably, *Chāngu Nārāyan* Temple (2nd to 4th century) with a long history, *Gokarṇeshwara* Temple, *Basantpur Durbar Square*, *Patan Bagalāmukhi* Temple Complex, *Tudāl* Devi Temple in *Naxāl*, *Ta-Bahāl* in Kathmandu, *Bajrayogini* Temple are visited as per the requirements. In the sculptural images installed at the above mentioned temple premises, along with string (*Tantri*) instruments, *Avanadda*, *Ghana*, and *Shushir* musical instruments were also found. Thus, the collected sculptures can be studied on the basis of instruments of *Tat*, *Bitat*, *Avanadda*, *Ghana*, and *Shushir* classes in future. But in the present study, an attempt has been made to describe and analyze only wood, metal, and stone arts with reference to stringed instruments.



Figure 1: Goddess Saraswati, north to Hanuman Dhoka. Source: self.



Figure 2 : Goddess Saraswati, north to Hanuman Dhoka. Source: self.

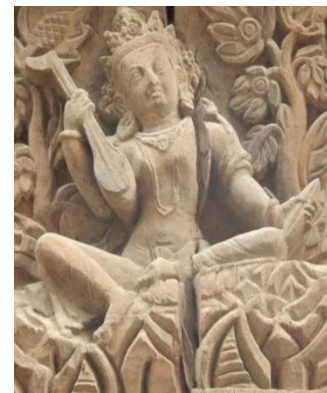


Figure 3 : An idol with Veena and Kathtal, west to Hanuman Dhoka. Source: self.



Figure 4 : Goddess Saraswati, east door of Changu Narayan Temple. Source: self.



Figure 5 : Animal headed idol with string instrument, Kumbeshwar Temple of Patan. Source: self.



Figure 6 : Bird headed idol with string instrument, Kumbeshwar Temple of Patan. Source: self.

String instruments carved in stone were found in some sculptures around the *Hanumān Dhokā* Durbar area in Kathmandu. At the north side of the *Hanumān Dhokā*, near the *Mahendreshwar Mahādev* temple, there are two stone idols of Goddess Saraswati holding a *veenā* (Figures: 1 and 2). These two idols are very similar to each other. The *veenā* of the first idol is in a broken state. Although the *veena* appears in the same posture in both these sculptures, the first Figure has a large *Tumbā* (part of *veenā*) in the *veenā*, while the *veenā* in the second has a smaller *Tumbā*. The size of *Tumba* varies depending upon the kinds of *veena*. In the eastern philosophy, *Saraswati* has been worshiped as the goddess of knowledge and music since *Vedic* times. For this reason, a *veenā* is often seen engraved on the idol of *Saraswati*.

In the same area, in front of the shelter where the *Damāha* (a big leather drum) is kept, in the lower part of the turret window of the temple, a wooden idol has *Kathāl* (percussion instrument of wood) in the left hand and holding a string instrument in the right hand can be seen (Figure: 3). Since the female character in this image is holding a *veenā* and a book, it can be assumed that she is *Saraswati*. A similar wooden statue in the form of a four-armed deity holding a string instrument in the left hand is also engraved on the east-faced door of the *Chāngu Nārāyan* temple, but it is not clear whether the statue has a *Kathāl* or some other object (Figure: 4). If the object is a book, it can be said to be an idol of *Saraswati*.

The *Kumbeshwar* Temple of *Pātan* is also an important area from the point of view of music. Here too, at the temple courtyard, from the door to the lower part of the main window of the temple, including the *Hiti* (water tap), wood art and stone art engraved with musical instruments can be seen. In the lower part of the main window of the temple, the idols of two humans with animal heads are carved. On those, standing in a dance posture, the first one has the head of a pig and the second has the head of a bird (Figure: 5 and Figure: 6) which can be inferred as *Kākbhushundi* and *Kinnar* or *Kimpurush*. According to the spiritual epic *Rāmāyana*, *Kākbhushundi* gave up his body by singing the story of *Rāma* to *Garuda* (King of Bird) and *Hanumān* (super supporter of Lord *Rāma*).

By the observation, the instruments seem a type of *veenā* and appear to be multi-stringed. Similarly, the observation concludes that during the ancient times there was a practice to play the *veenā* with a standing up posture or if it is not so, it can be assumed that the instruments held in the hand are *Ektāre* (Single string instrument). *Ektare* is such kind of *veena* which is played while chanting in walking mode. If the proportion of the human body and the size of the *veenā* in both these arts are compared, the size of the carried *veenā* is small in comparison to the size of

the human body. These characters have carried their instrument easily as the *Ektare* is carried. Similarly, the appearance of the *veenā* in a dance posture reflects the sculptor's imagination rather than reality.

Similarly, small idols of two characters playing the *veenā* can be seen at the upper and left part of the northern gate of the *Kumbeshwar* temple. Both of those crown bearers are in the seated posture (Figure: 7 and Figure: 8). Although there is currently a practice to play the *veenā* with the fingers of both hands, in both of these sculptures, the left hand can be seen alike the current posture as today, and the right hand can be seen with a large plucker or spectrum.



Figure 7 : Veena player with one knee down and spectrum in right hand, Kumbeshwar Temple of Pātan. Source: self.



Figure 8 : Veena player with spectrum in right hand, Kumbeshwar Temple of Pātan. Source: self.

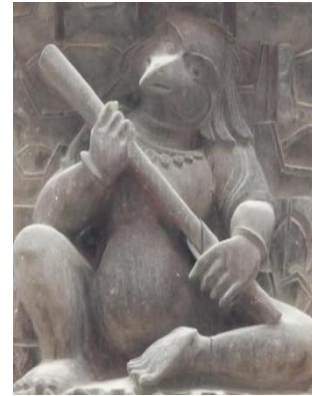


Figure 9 : Bird headed idol with string instruments, Gokarṇeshwara Temple of Kathmandu. Source: self.

Similarly, in Figure: 7, the player is sitting and playing *veenā* on one knee, so it can be assumed that the playing posture was different at that time.

Inside the *Pashupatināth* temple courtyard, the lower part of the *Natyeshwar* idol appears engrossed in playing music, including the dancing *Ganesh*, while on the side of the *Natyeshwar* an idol is seen dancing with her musical instrument. Through this idol, the deities were skilled in dancing, singing, and playing music and it can be assumed that the practice of playing musical instruments in groups dates back to the *Vedic* times.



Figure 10 : An idol of female with string instrument, Gokarṇeshwara Temple of Kathmandu. Source: self.



Figure 11 : An idol of animal headed with string instrument, Gokarṇeshwara Temple of Kathmandu. Source: self.

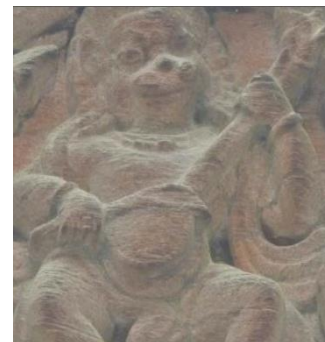


Figure 12 : Animal headed holding string instrument with spectrum, Gokarṇeshwara Temple of Kathmandu. Source: self.

The *Gokarṇeshwara* Temple, located in the northern part of *Kathmandu* valley, is also considered important from an archaeological point of view. Some of the wooden works in the temple courtyard seem to be musically and historically relevant. Alike in the courtyard of the *Kumbeshwar* temple, an image of a bird-headed male (*Kākbhushundi*) holding an instrument (Figure: 9) is carved in front of the temple. In this image, the character is seated and holding a thin instrument-like object. Similarly, on the north side, one of the strut is carved of a woman playing string instrument (Figure: 10). In the other sculpture, a male with the head of the animal plays the *tantrivādya* (Figure: 11), and in the another sculpture, a male with the head of an animal (Figure: 12) is playing the *tantrivādya* with a bow, in a standing posture. In another wood art, a monkey-like character can be seen sitting and playing a string instrument by using bow in *Gokarṇeshwara* temple.

On the foundation (plinth) of the eastern side of the *Chāngu Nārāyan* temple, a stone idol can be found engraved with playing a musical instrument with a bow in right hand (Figure: 13).



Figure 13: Stone sculpture with bow and instrument, *Chāngu Nārāyan* temple. Source: self.



Figure 14 : Metal sculpture in the temple outside of *Seto Machindra Nāth*. Source: self.



Figure 15 : *Dhritarāshtra* with string instrument at *Seto Machindra Nāth*, *KTM*. Source: self.

While visiting the temple of *Seto Machindra Nāth* in *Kathmandu*, due to the fact that the temple is being rebuilt, it was not possible to observe the inside of the temple, but outside, metal carvings of characters with string instruments can be seen on the roof banner (*Phyātan-chā*) (Figures: 14 and 15). According to *Buddhism* tradition, king *Dhritarāshtra* is the lord of *Gandharba* (mythological musicians). He protects the east side of the *Sumeru Jambudvip*. So, it can be assumed that the east side roof banner is carved of *Dhritarāshtra* with his *veenā*. *Buddhist* people know him as *Veenārāj*, the master of *veenā* (Shakya, 1999, 60).

Analyzing the above sculptures, many facts have been found in the musical instrument – *Tantri Vādya*. There is variation in the number of strings. Some of the string instruments are larger and some are smaller, that one can handle and play with a single hand. Likewise, another remarkable fact is the playing style and posture of instrumentalists. The structure of *Tantri Vadyā* is also found in a different ratio in comparison with the character's body. Some of the idols were found playing instruments in a standing position, some in a sitting position and some in a single knee-down position. All the musical instruments are the kinds of ancient *veenā*. The players found are the religious and mythological characters: *Devi*, *Gana*, *Kākbhushundi*, human beings with animal and bird heads, and humans.

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In the woodcarving and stone-carving in Figures: 12, and 13, it is seen that a palm-sized object is used to play the instrument, while in other sculptures stringed instruments are played with fingers. The object can be the bow and the musical instrument can be the bowing instrument like *Israj*, *Sarangi*. Therefore, it appears that both types of *tantri* instruments (bowing and plucking) are prevalent in *Nepal* during the bygone period.

Similarly, the metallic sculpture found around the *Seto Machindra* temple complex has human figures playing the *veenā* of similar kinds. The important fact is that the presence of a modern guitar-shaped instrument in the metalcraft (Figure: 15) in the roof banner is also seen. Therefore, the creation of this art reflects modern thought of the sculptor.

Conclusion:

Since ancient times, there has been an interdependent relationship between music and sculpture in the *Sanātana* religion, tradition, and customs that have been practiced in *Nepal*. Due to this interrelationship, the musical instruments: *Tat*, *Avanadda*, *Ghana*, and *Shushir* have also been engraved in *Nepali* sculpture. The presence of musical instruments in the sculptural arts established here is a historically and musically important aspect. In the present study, at some of the renowned temple premises among the world heritage enlisted sites, the presence of the *Tantri Vādya* in the sculptural arts has been explored and analyzed. From the study, the structure of the string instrument, the playing style, and posture of the instrument player, and the types of instruments in the sculptures were found to vary with each other. Some of the string instruments are found to be played by bows and played in various postures. It seems that future researchers will find relevant guidance from the present research that was accomplished even with fewer resources and means. Likewise, it can be expected that other relevant bodies will get an authentic base and guide to perform various decision-making functions. The present study, as a remarkable reference, will contribute to the future researchers who can study the historical aspects of verities of musical instruments in the coming days.

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